

# OCALA EVENING STAR

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OCALA, FLORIDA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1905

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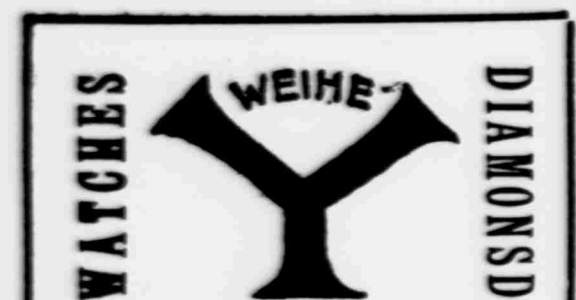
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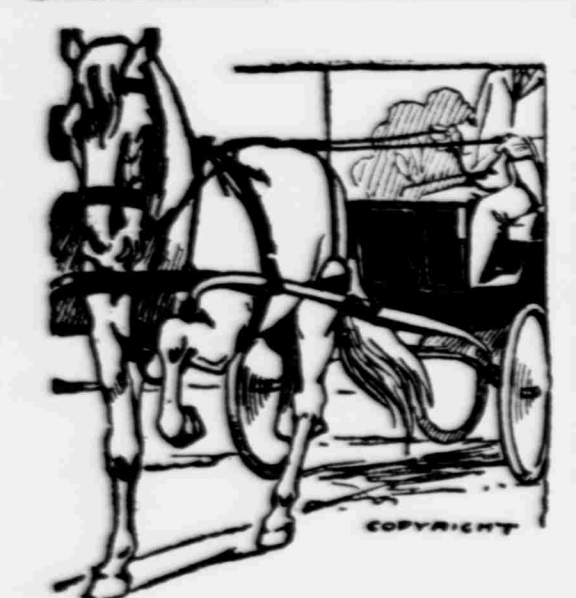
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## At Double Tee Ranch

By FRANK H. SWEET  
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"No man can win me until he proves  
himself a better cowboy than I am,"  
flashed the girl. Then, as her gaze  
swept over the assembled outfit of the  
Double Tee ranch, she broke into a  
ringing, scornful laugh. But the men  
felt there had been more than jest in  
her words. Hair-faced Tom Bigelow  
—Wooley Dog Tom—placed his hand  
over his heart.

"Them's p'inted sentiments, Miss  
Tensie," he rebuked suavely, "and it  
implies you boys here considerable, see-  
ing four of us have asked you to marry  
since you stood here on the horse.  
Now in justice to the Double Tee out-  
fit we'd ask you to name the conditions  
and cards. If it's to round up a stamp-  
eding herd single handed or ride a  
loosed horse or—"

"I don't think the man's among you,  
Mr. Wooley," interrupted the girl. "If  
you'll hurry Pete up with that note I'll  
be going. I could have written a dozen  
answers in this time. There he comes  
now."

A cowboy was emerging from the  
ranch shack, and following him was  
the new owner, fresh from the east  
and immaculate in a tailor made cow-  
boy costume. He was a handsome fel-  
low and came forward quickly, doffing  
his hat.

"Tell your father I am awfully oblig-  
ed to him for his neighborliness, Miss  
Neuman," he said, "and that he can  
depend upon me to be at the ranch-  
men's meeting. I want to identify  
myself with the country now. That  
note will explain about the horses. I'm  
sorry to have kept you waiting so long,  
but there seemed to be no paper or  
pencil in the outfit."

Tensie Neuman took the note and  
bowed, then touched her horse lightly.  
As she swept away the curiosity in the  
new owner's eyes was mingled with  
surprised admiration.

"A magnificent girl!" he ejaculated  
inventively. But Robson, the fore-  
man, was near enough to hear him.

"Yes," he said quietly, "you don't see  
such girls in the east, Mr. Rand, and  
even here on the plains Miss Tensie is  
an exception."

"She's a goddess!" agreed Mr. Rand  
enthusiastically. Then he swung sud-  
denly to the outfit, his face darkening.

"Look here, men!" he cried hotly. "I  
don't like the way you talked to that  
girl. It was positively insulting. Why,  
I heard four of you proposing to the  
girl right here in the presence of all  
the rest, and you were in earnest."

"In dead earnest," assented Wooley  
Dog Tom pathetically, "the dearest  
kind of earnest. An' I have myself  
heard the same four propose to her in-  
dividually an' collectively more times  
than I've got fingers an' toes an' gen-  
erally in the presence of witnesses. An'  
why not? Everybody knows every  
cuss here loves her, an' 'tain't nothin'  
to be ashamed of. Lord, Mr. Rand,  
we've been acquainted with Miss Ten-  
sie ever since her father brought her to  
this ranch two years ago, an' we've  
been proposing to her on all chances  
an' occasions through the twenty-four  
months. I'd have asked her to marry  
me today only these covies kept their  
everlasting jaws going."

"What gets me," said Wild Smith  
gently, "is how she snaps out some-  
times, just like now. Maybe we ought  
to draw her off by herself, boys, an'  
not speak out so in meetin'. Maybe  
girls like proposin' to be private re-  
hearsals."

"Not Miss Tensie," declared Wooley  
Dog Tom authoritatively. "It's prac-  
tice for her to say no in different ways.  
She's bound to like it. Lord, I'd rather  
hear her say no than any other girl yes!  
It's worth proposin' just to have her  
eyes on one and her attention for a  
minute. And that's the way we all  
feel. Every cuss in this outfit has been  
proposin' to her, except Robson there,  
an' he don't propose to nobody. He's  
too all-fired dried up. Now, Mr.  
Rand—"

"Never mind bringing me in," said  
Mr. Rand shortly. "No girl cares to be  
proposed to in that way, much less a  
girl like Miss Neuman. You cow-  
boys—"

"Are as fine a lot of men as there  
are in the world," finished the foreman  
briskly. "I am glad you feel that way  
about us, Mr. Rand, especially as you  
are to become a cowboy, in a way,  
yourself. Miss Tensie regards us in  
the same manner, for she knows that  
any one in the outfit would give his  
life freely to save her from danger,  
and that is more than many of the  
well-dressed men east would do. The  
mere fact of her having to familiarize  
us with the word 'No' detracts nothing  
from the warm feeling between her  
and the outfit. And, yes, I will add  
that, contrary to Mr. Wooley Dog  
Tom's belief, I proposed to her myself  
more than a year ago and was refused.  
Now—sharply—all of you scatter to  
the upper range and relieve the boys  
there. Keep an extra keen lookout for  
the wolves are around again and liable  
to cause another bad stampede. Miss  
Tensie rode that way, you know, and  
brave and familiar with cattle as she  
is, I wouldn't like her to get in front  
of a stampede when wolves were be-  
hind. I don't think there is any real  
danger, of course, or I would have  
warned her. Wolves are not apt to  
venture out till night, but I shall go  
along."

There had not been a serious stamp-  
ede for several weeks, though scatter-  
ing wolves were seen almost daily  
along the edge of the foothills. At  
night the cowboys were unusually vigi-  
lant, with occasional fire built at dan-  
gerous points, and so the wolves had

(Concluded on Fourth Page.)

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(Concluded on Fourth Page.)

**When the  
Deacon  
Culled**

By DONALD ALLEN  
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There were few harder headed men  
in Ingham county than Darius Parker,  
farmer. He was reserved, close-mouthed  
and without a particle of romance or  
sentiment in his composition. The  
notes of the meadow lark were the same  
as the grunts of his hogs to him,  
and when he looked out over the mag-  
nificent sweep of the meadow he sim-  
ply figured on how many tons of hay  
to the acre it would cut. Persons who  
had known him for twenty years had  
never known him to betray a soft spot,  
and even when his wife died, after  
twenty years of cutting carpet rags and  
making soft soap, no one looked for  
any emotion on the deacon's part. He  
buried her the same as he went about  
plowing corn, and instead of taking a  
housekeeper he decided to cook his  
own meals.

No one looked for any change in Dea-  
con Parker, but one came within six  
months. The first sign of it was when  
he had his hair colored black and shaved  
off the whiskers that had hidden  
most of his face since he was a young  
man. When that nine day wonder  
had passed he had another surprise  
ready. He bought a new suit of  
clothes, including a long tailed coat,  
and began to wear paper collars on  
week days as well as Sundays. He  
was heard to speak of sunrises and  
sunsets and other sentimental things,  
and the hired men on the next farm  
overheard him one day humming a  
love song.

Inside of sixty days the deacon had  
half the county guessing what would  
happen next.

Aunt Sally Merriman was responsi-  
ble for all the changes. The deacon  
went over to her house one day to bor-  
row a farm implement and happened  
to mention that he was lonely. Aunt  
Sally had been waiting for such an  
opening for several weeks past.

"Now, deacon," she began, "sit down  
on the doorstep and let's have a talk.  
Betsy was a good wife to you. Her  
soft soap had no equal in the county,  
and we all had to go to her to find out  
how to make slappacks. She was al-  
ways sewing and darning and color-  
ing, and she never snarled back when  
you ordered her around. You didn't  
cry at her funeral, but I know you ap-  
preciated her just the same."

"Yes, Betsy was a good wife to me,"  
sighed the deacon.

"But she was took away."

"Yes; she was cut down."

"And you are living all stark alone."

"Yes."

"Deacon," continued Aunt Sally after  
a bit, "what would you do if you should  
have colic in the night?"

"I'd—I'd have to try to cure it,  
wouldn't I?"

"You would, but you might die twice  
over and none of us would know any-  
thing about it. Then there is the en-  
cuche, the toothache, dizziness of the  
head, cold feet and a dozen other  
things. I fairly shiver when I think of  
what may happen to you any night."

"But how can I help it, Aunt Sally?"

"That's what I'm coming to. You  
orter get married again."

"Good lands!" exclaimed the deacon  
as he flushed up.

"Yes, sir, you orter, and I'm not the  
only one to say so. You are only a  
middle aged man, and the idea of your  
sloshing around alone all the rest of  
your life is preposterous. I am sure  
that Betsy would be glad to know that  
you had some one to care for you. How  
you manage to sleep I dunno, for no  
man on earth can make a bed fit to  
sleep in. Yes, Darius, you must marry  
agin."

"But who'll I marry?"

"I've got that all fixed. I have a sis-  
ter in Indiana who is a widder woman.  
She's coming out here to visit us purty  
soon. Sarah is a worker, just like Betsy  
used to be and just as economical.  
I've known her to make one pound of  
brown sugar last for two weeks. Her  
disposition is cheerful. She hasn't got a  
mite of temper, and the pair of you  
would get along like two doves."

"Wouldn't folks talk?" cautiously  
queried the deacon.

"What could they talk about? Hain't  
you got a right to get married agin?"

"Of course, but you see I hain't got  
a headstone for Betsy's grave yet, and  
some one might say something mean."

"You can hustle around and get a  
headstone within a week, and Sarah  
won't care how many lambs are on top  
of it. Then you want to spruce up and  
look your best. I must tell you that  
Sarah is a little romantic, and you  
want to be the same. Washing and  
ironing will take it out of her after  
while, but you don't want to cut it  
off too short."

"I don't believe I could be romantic."

"Yes, you could. All you've got to  
do is to talk about shady dells, harvest  
moons, autumn flowers and floating  
clouds. Sarah has got over \$3,000 in  
cash in the bank, and it'll all be yours.  
I'm no matchmaker, deacon, but I tell  
you that you orter marry and that the  
woman to fill the bill is my sister  
Sarah."

The deacon shouldered the hoe he  
had come to borrow and started for  
his cornfield, and as he worked he  
thought. By sundown he had come  
to a conclusion, and it wasn't many  
days before the barber in the nearest  
town was applying the dye to his griz-  
zled locks. He began to notice the  
clouds, the sunsets and the wild flow-  
ers around him, and he had learned his  
lesson pretty well when Aunt Sally's  
sister appeared.

She had been posted by letter about  
the deacon and they got on well to-  
gether from the start. Three nights a

(Concluded on Fourth Page.)

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